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## General

Guatemala is located in Middle America, bordering the Caribbean Sea, between Honduras and Belize and bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between El Salvador and Mexico.

It has about 70 miles of coast on the Caribbean side and 220 miles on the Pacific side. San Jose is the largest port on the Pacific coast.

The climate is tropical; hot and humid in the lowlands, and cooler in the highlands.

The terrain is mostly mountains with narrow coastal plains and rolling limestone plateaus.

The entire Pacific coast is bordered by a 30 mile wide belt of tropical lowland backed inland by high mountainous country of volcanic origin. Many of the peaks of this range rise to elevations in excess of 3,658m.

The Pacific slope of this range is the most densely populated section of the country. Violent earthquakes are a frequent occurrence and in the past have caused considerable damage to the capital city of Guatemala.

The N part of the country contains the great plain of Peten, a low, humid, and heavily forested area which comprises about one-third of the total territory of the state.

The greater part of this region is uncultivated, although many districts have extremely fertile soils and an abundance of water.

## Buoyage System

The IALA Buoyage System (Region B) is in effect.

See Chart No. 1 for further IALA Buoyage System information.

## Currency

The official unit of currency is the quetzal, consisting of 100 centavos.

## Government

Guatemala, under the terms of a new constitution adopted in 1986 and amended in 1993, is administered under a President and Vice President who are elected to nonrenewable 4-year terms. Congress, comprised of 80 members, is also elected to 4-year terms.

The capital is Guatemala City.

## Holidays

The following holidays are observed:

January 1, New Year's Day; Maundy Thursday; Good Friday; May 1, Labor Day; Mother's Day; June 30, Revolution Day; September 15, Independence Day; November 1, All Saint's Day; and December 25, Christmas Day.

## Industries

The main industries are based on food and beverages, tobacco, chemicals, textiles, petroleum, metals, rubber, and tourism.

## Languages

The official language of Guatemala is Spanish.

**Time Zone**

The Time Zone description is SIERRA (+6).

**U.S. Embassy**

The U.S. Embassy is located in Guatemala City. The mailing address is 7-01 Avenida d la Redroma, Zone 10, Guatemala City, APO AA 34024.